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Publication number:

0 036 636
A1

EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

Application number: 81102068.4

Int. Cl.³: C 07 C 107/06, C 09 B 29/14

Date of filing: 19.03.81

Priority: 28.03.80 SE 8002321

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Date of publication of application: 30.09.81
Bulletin 81/39

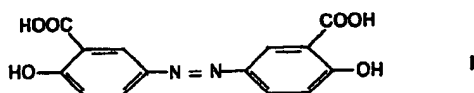
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Designated Contracting States: AT BE CH DE FR GB IT LI LU NL SE

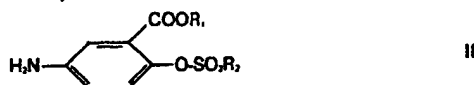
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A method and intermediates for preparing 3,3'-azo-bis-(6-hydroxy benzoic acid).

A method of preparing 3,3'-azo-bis-(6-hydroxy benzoic acid) of formula I



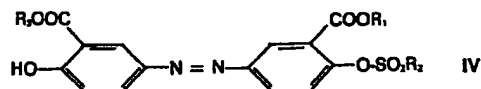
and salts thereof in high purity. According to the invention a compound II



is diazotized, and the diazonium salt obtained is coupled with a compound III



The formed Intermediate IV, which is also comprised by the invention,



is hydrolyzed in alkaline medium to form the compound I. R₁, R₂ and R₃ signify lower alkyl. R₂ also possibly substituted phenyl.

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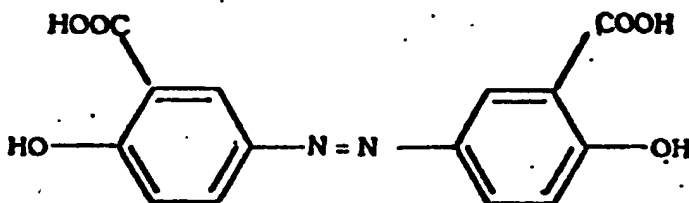
ATTORNEY DOCKET NUMBER: 9741-010-999

SERIAL NUMBER: 10/666,819

REFERENCE: B02

A method and intermediates for preparing 3,3'-azo-bis-(6-hydroxy benzoic acid).

The present invention relates to a new method and new intermediates for preparing 3,3'-azo-bis-(6-hydroxy benzoic acid) of the formula



5 and salts thereof. The new method according to the invention makes it possible to prepare the compound of formula I and its salts, especially pharmaceutically acceptable salts, in very high purity, for example 98% and more, and with good yields.

The compound of formula I is known as such and has found
10 commercial use as a dystuff. A known method for preparing the compound I involves alkaline hydrolysis of 3,3'-azo-6-chloro-6'-hydroxy-dibenzoic acid at high temperature, possibly in the presence of copper: see for example DE Patent 278613. In an alternative known method of preparation the compound in question is prepared by a corresponding alkaline hydrolysis of 3,3'-azo-bis-
15 (6-chlorobenzoic acid): see for example GB Patent 408676. In a third known method of preparation 5-amino salicylic acid is diazotized and coupled with salicylic acid in the presence of trivalent chromium, whereupon the chromium complex formed is decomposed for setting free the compound I: see for example DE Patent 590321.

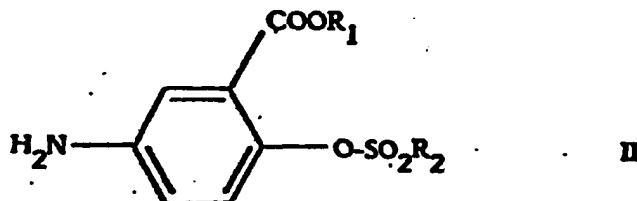
20 The first mentioned method of preparation is the one which is used commercially. The product obtained in this hydrolysis of 3,3'-azo-6-chloro-6'-hydroxy-dibenzoic acid is not pure, but contains comparatively great amounts of starting material (e.g. 20 to 30%). Further, the desired end product I is not stable under the severe hydrolysis conditions but is decomposed, i.a. to 5-
25 amino salicylic acid.

It would theoretically be possible to separate the end product I from the starting material, for example by using liquid chromatographic analysis technique. Such separation methods are, however, economically impossible to apply for practical preparative use. Because of the very similar properties of
30 the starting and the end compounds it has not either been possible to separate them by crystallisation.

The alternative synthesis route via the chromium complex of the compound I does not either yield any pure product since impurities of chromium always are present. Because of such impurities the compound I, when prepared in this manner, cannot be used as e.g. a drug.

5 It is an object of the present invention to provide a technically simple and economically advantageous new method of preparing 3,3'-azo-(bis-6-hydroxy-benzoic acid) of formula I, in which the desired product is obtained in considerably higher purity than in the known methods of preparation. In particular, the invention makes it possible to prepare the compound I in a
10 purity of at least 98%, thereby making it possible to use the compound in question as a drug, for example for treating inflammatory intestinal diseases such as, for example, ulcerous colitis. This use is described in our simultaneously herewith filed patent application no.(corresponding to Swedish Patent Application No. 8002322-9 filed March 26, 1980), herein
15 incorporated by reference.

The method according to the invention is a multi step method for preparing the compound of formula I and salts thereof, starting from compounds of formula II

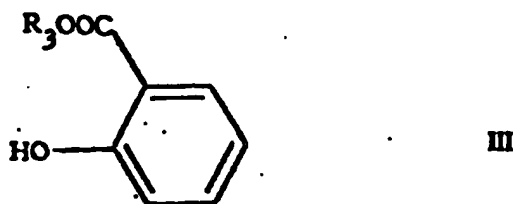


20 wherein R_1 is a lower alkyl group having 1 to 6 carbon atoms, and R_2 is a lower alkyl group having 1 to 6 carbon atoms or phenyl or substituted phenyl. Preferred lower alkyl groups are such having 1 to 3 carbon atoms such as methyl. A phenyl group R_2 can be mono- or polysubstituted by groups being inert under the reaction conditions, such as alkyl, alkoxy, halogen, etc. Acid
25 addition salts of the compound II can also be used as starting materials, especially salts with a mineral acid or a strong organic acid.

The starting compound of formula II is diazotized in a manner known
per se to the corresponding diazonium salt. The diazotation is preferably carried out in conventional manner by treatment with nitrous acid in acid
30 aqueous solution.

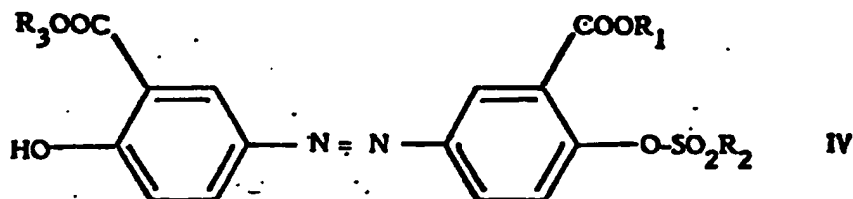
The formed diazonium salt of the compound II is then coupled in alkaline solution, preferably in the presence of an alkali metal hydroxide such

as a potassium hydroxide, with a compound of the formula III



wherein R_3 is hydrogen or a lower alkyl group having 1 to 6 carbon atoms, preferably 1 to 3 carbon atoms such as methyl.

5 The product formed, which corresponds to the formula IV



wherein R_1 , R_2 and R_3 are as indicated above,

is then isolated in a manner known per se, for example by acidifying the reaction mixture to precipitate the product of formula IV. It has been found
 10 that the compounds of the formula IV have excellent crystallization properties, thereby making it very simple to purify these compounds to the desired extent by recrystallization. For the recrystallization a great number of inert organic solvents can be used, for example lower aliphatic ketones such as acetone, 2-butanone etc., lower alkanols such as methanol, ethanol etc., aromatic
 15 hydrocarbons such as toluene, etc., organic acids and esters such as acetic acid, ethyl acetate, etc., or mixtures thereof.

The compound of formula IV, worked up to the desired purity, is then hydrolized in an aqueous reaction medium to the desired end product of formula I while splitting off the groups $-R_1$, $-R_3$ and $-SO_2R_2$, whereupon the
 20 end product of formula I - or salts thereof - are isolated from the reaction mixture. The hydrolysis is preferably carried out in alkaline environment, especially in the presence of an alkali metal hydroxide and possibly an inert, water-miscible solvent, for example alkanones such as acetone, alkanols such as methanol, ethanol, etc. It would be obvious to a person skilled in the art
 25 that the hydrolysis conditions can be chosen such that the amounts of partially

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hydrolized products are minimized while at the same time no significant amounts of secondary byproducts are formed. It may, as an example, be mentioned that the hydrolysis advantageously can be carried out by boiling in water between 0.5 and 2 h using sodium hydroxide as the base. As mentioned

5 above, and in contrast to the intermediate IV, it is comparatively difficult to purify the end product I, and it is therefore essential that the hydrolysis be carried out in the indicated manner, especially if the end product I is to be used as a drug.

After the hydrolysis has been carried out the end product is isolated

10 from the reaction mixture in a manner known per se, preferably by neutralization or acidification of the reaction mixture, for example by means of a mineral acid such as hydrochloric acid or sulphuric acid, or a strong organic acid such as acetic acid.

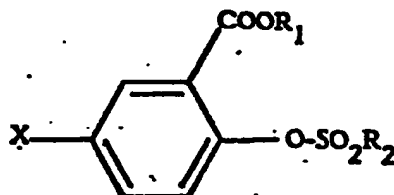
The compound of formula I can be isolated as such or in the form of

15 a corresponding salt, preferably a pharmaceutically acceptable salt such as an alkali metal salt. A preferred way of recovering such salts is to partially neutralize the reaction mixture with an acid to a suitable pH for precipitation of the desired salt. For example, the di-sodium and di-potassium salts can be prepared by acidifying the reaction mixture to pH 5-8, preferably 6-7, using a

20 mineral acid or an organic acid such as acetic acid. Alternatively it is, of course, also possible to prepare the desired salts by reacting, in a manner known per se, the isolated acid with any suitable salt forming base.

The starting compounds of formula II used in the method according to the invention can be prepared in accordance with methods known per se or

25 in analogy with methods known per se. For example, the compounds can be prepared by reduction of a corresponding compound of formula V



wherein R_1 and R_2 are as indicated above and X is a group which can be converted into an amino group, for example a nitro or arylazo group.

30 The invention also comprises compounds of formula IV which - as mentioned above - have proved to possess valuable crystallization properties

and because thereof are excellently well suited as intermediates for the preparation of valuable end compounds such as 3,3'-azo-bis(6-hydroxy-benzoic acid) of formula I.

Although the method and the intermediates according to the invention primarily are intended for preparing 3,3'-azo-bis(6-hydroxy-benzoic acid) of pharmaceutically acceptable purity, it would be obvious that they also can be used for preparing this compound for other use, wherein the requirements on purity are not as high.

The invention will now be illustrated in more detail in connection with some special non-limiting examples.

Example 1

(Preparation of starting materials)

a) Methyl-2-methane sulfonyloxy-5-nitro-benzoate.

98.5 g of methyl-2-hydroxy-5-nitro-benzoate were dissolved in 250 ml of pyridine, whereupon 68.5 g of methane sulonyl chloride were added. After heating to 50°C for 10 minutes the solution was poured on 5N ice cooled hydrochloric acid. The oil formed was extracted with chloroform. The chloroform phase was washed with water, dried and evaporated. 50 ml of toluene were added and evaporated. This was repeated once, the oil then crystallizing. Yield: 132 g of the title substance.

b) Methyl-3-amino-6-methane sulfonyloxy-benzoate.

132 g of the nitro compound from step a) were hydrogenated in 500 ml of acetic acid and 3 g of 10% palladium-on-carbon at 1-3 at. After the theoretical amount of hydrogen gas had been consumed the mixture was filtered and evaporated. It was dissolved in 1 liter of Isopropanol at 65°C, whereupon HCl in ethanol was added. The hydrochloride crystallized upon cooling. After filtering the substance was shaken with sodium carbonate in water and chloroform. The chloroform phase was evaporated. The amine was re-crystallized from methanol/water. Yield: 93 g of the pure title substance.

Example 2

a) Methyl-2-hydroxy-5-((4-methane sulfonyloxy-3-metoxycarbonyl-phenyl)-azo)-benzoate.

12.2 g of methyl-3-amino-6-methane sulfonyloxy-benzoate (prepared according to Example 1), 75 ml of 2N hydrochloric acid and 200 g of ice were diazotized at 0°C with 3.5 g of sodium nitrite in 20 ml of water. The diazonium salt solution was rapidly mixed with a freshly prepared solution of 15.2 g of methyl salicylate, 12 g of 85% potassium hydroxide and 1 liter of ice-

water while stirring vigorously. The coupling solution was acidified with hydrochloric acid after about 15 seconds. The precipitated oily product was extracted with chloroform. After drying, evaporation, and re-crystallization from 2-butanone the title substance was obtained in a yield of 12.8 g (63%).

- 5 The purity was determined by liquid chromatographic analysis (HPLC) on a "reversed phase"-column (μ -Bondapak C_{18}) with methanol/water (75:25) as eluant. The total amount of impurities was only about 0.6 area percent.

b) 3,3'-azo-bis(6-hydroxy-benzoic acid).

- 10 41 g of methyl-2-hydroxy-5-((4-methane sulfonyloxy-3-methoxy-carbonylphenyl)azo)benzoate, prepared according to step a), were hydrolyzed by boiling in 800 ml of 1N sodium hydroxide for 4 h. The hydrolyzed product was precipitated by addition of concentrated hydrochloric acid to pH of about 2. The precipitate was filtered and washed with water. Yield: 29.7 g (98%) of the title substance.

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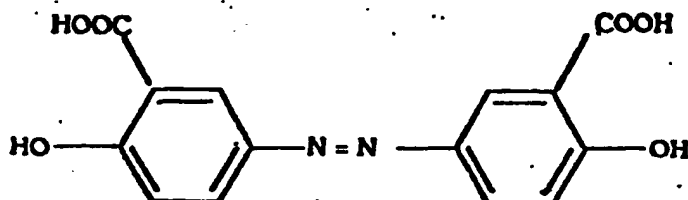
Example 3

Disodium-3,3'-azo-bis(6-hydroxy-benzoate).

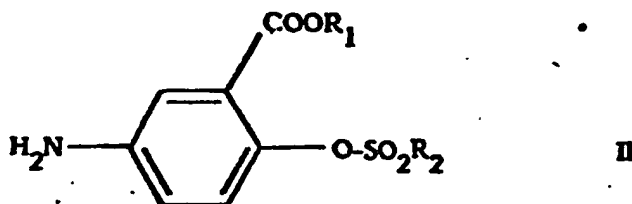
- 20 624 g of methyl-2-hydroxy-5-((4-methane sulfonyloxy-3-methoxy-carbonyl phenyl)-azo)benzoate, prepared according to step a) of Example 2, were during 15 minutes added in portions to 3 liter of water and 428 g of sodium hydroxide while boiling. After boiling for 30 minutes 360 ml of acetic acid were added during 15 minutes to pH 6. The suspension was stirred for 1.5 h without cooling, the temperature falling to 70°C. After cooling to 30°C the suspension was filtered and washed with 700 ml of methanol. After drying the title substance was obtained in a yield of 520 g (98.5%). The purity was
- 25 99.0% according to ion pair - liquid chromatographic analysis on a "reversed phase"-column (μ -Bondapak C_{18}) using methanol/water (57:43) as eluant and tetrabutyl ammonium as counter ion.

CLAIMS

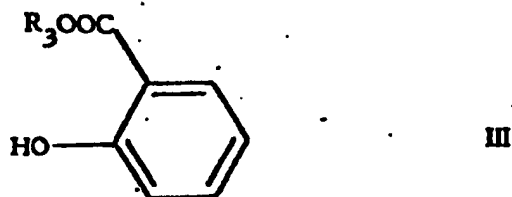
1. A method of preparing 3,3'-azo-bis-(6-hydroxy benzoic acid) of formula I



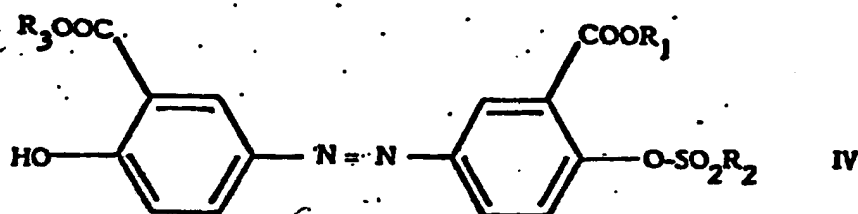
- 5 and salts thereof, comprising the steps of:
diazotizing a compound of formula II or a salt thereof



- wherein R₁ is lower alkyl and R₂ is lower alkyl, phenyl or substituted phenyl,
coupling the diazonium salt obtained in alkaline aqueous solution to a
10 compound of formula III

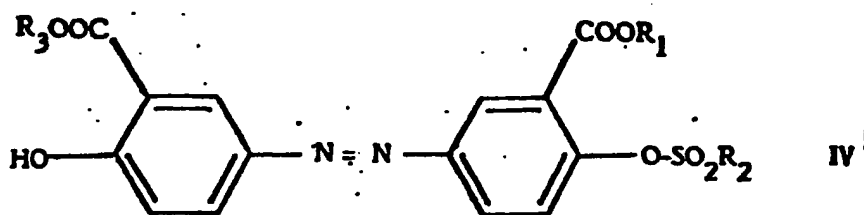


- wherein R₃ is hydrogen or lower alkyl,
to form a compound of formula IV



wherein R_1 , R_2 and R_3 are as indicated above,
and hydrolizing in alkaline medium the compound of formula IV, and isolating
the compound of formula I or a salt thereof.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the coupling of the diazonium salt
5 of the compound of formula II to the compound of formula III is carried out in
the presence of an alkali metal hydroxide.
3. The method of claim 1 or 2, further comprising the step of isolating
and purifying the compound of formula IV before the alkaline hydrolysis.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the purification of the compound IV
10 is carried out by re-crystallization from an organic solvent.
5. The method of claim 1, 2, 3 or 4, wherein the hydrolysis of the
compound of formula IV is carried out in the presence of an alkali metal
hydroxide.
6. The method of any one of claims 1-5, comprising the step of
15 precipitating, after the hydrolysis of the compound of formula IV, the end
compound of formula I or a salt thereof by lowing the pH of the reaction
mixture.
7. The method of any one of claims 1-6, for preparing the di-sodium
salt of the compound of formula I, comprising the steps of hydrolizing the
20 compound of formula IV using sodium hydroxide and precipitating said di-
sodium salt by neutralization to pH 5-8.
8. Compounds of formula IV



wherein R_1 is lower alkyl, R_2 is lower alkyl, phenyl or substituted phenyl, and R_3 is hydrogen or lower alkyl.

9. A compound according to claim 8, wherein R_1 , R_2 and R_3 all are methyl.

10. 3,3'-azo-bis-(6-hydroxy benzoic acid) and salts thereof having pharmaceutically acceptable purity.



European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

0036636
Application number
EP 81 10 2068

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl.)
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	
D	<u>DE - C - 278 613</u> (J.R. GEIGY) * Whole document *	1	C 07 C 107/06 C 09 B 29/14
D	<u>GB - A - 408 676</u> (I.G. FARBEN) * Example 1 *	1	
D	<u>DE - C - 590 321</u> (I.G. FARBEN) * Whole document *	1	
A	<u>FR - A - 2 161 104</u> (PHARMACIA) * Page 6, table, designations A, H; page 8, paragraph 1 *		TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl.) C 07 C 107/06 107/00 C 09 B 29/14 29/12 29/10
A	<u>GB - A - 1 167 176</u> (DURAND & HUGUENIN) * Example 10 *		
A	<u>US - A - 4 045 429</u> (K.H. AGBACK) * Abstract *		
A	<u>FR - A - 754 674</u> (I.G. FARBEN)		CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X: particularly relevant A: technological background O: non-written disclosure P: intermediate document T: theory or principle underlying the invention E: conflicting application D: document cited in the application L: citation for other reasons &: member of the same patent family, corresponding document
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search The Hague	Date of completion of the search 19-06-1981	Examiner COUCKUYT	